

alzheimer's association™

Public Health Committee

Public Hearing, Monday, March 5th, 2007

Re: Raised H B 7157, An Act Concerning Direct Care Staff Training Requirements For Alzheimer's Special Care Units And Programs

Testimony of Nancy Leonard, Connecticut Chapter, Alzheimer's Association

My name is Nancy Leonard and I am a health care professional and a long time volunteer and advocate with the Alzheimer's Association. Last year, the legislation before us was passed and in subsequent conversations with the Department of Public Health the use of the term "licensed and registered" referring to the staff required to be trained, excluded many individuals who are employed in Alzheimer's special care units or programs. Since there is no universal definition for "direct care staff" we are suggesting that the language which would closely fulfill the stated purpose of the bill might read, "Each Alzheimer's special care unit or program shall annually provide Alzheimer's and dementia specific training to all staff who provide care and services to residents enrolled in special care units or programs. Such requirements shall include, but not be limited to"

In avoiding the terminology of "direct care staff and "direct patient care" we allow for a broader interpretation. In fact, because the Department of Public Health does not seem to have a universal definition for "direct care staff" it already is open to interpretation.

The rational behind this simply is that a majority of residents in either assisted living and especially in nursing homes have some form of dementia and a broader interpretation in meet training requirements in special care units we believe will provide a much better and a more holistic level of care.